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ABSTRACT

This booklet is part of a series of reports on "hot topics" in education. It discusses mentoring, a strategy that has become popular over the past decade. Pairing students with adult volunteers or older students who provide friendship, guidance, and support has been shown to be helpful to students and to provide benefits to mentors. Recognizing that no two mentoring programs are alike, the discussion focuses on how student mentoring works, the benefits associated with it, and strategies for designing successful mentoring programs that address the needs of individual students, communities, and schools. The effectiveness of any mentoring program depends largely on the individual circumstances of student needs, parental and administrative support, and the amount of time put into planning and supervising the program. Eight mentoring programs in the northwestern United States, some of which are in urban areas, are described. Appendixes contain a list of six guidebooks for developing mentoring programs and a list of Internet sites related to mentoring. (Contains 22 references.) (SLD)

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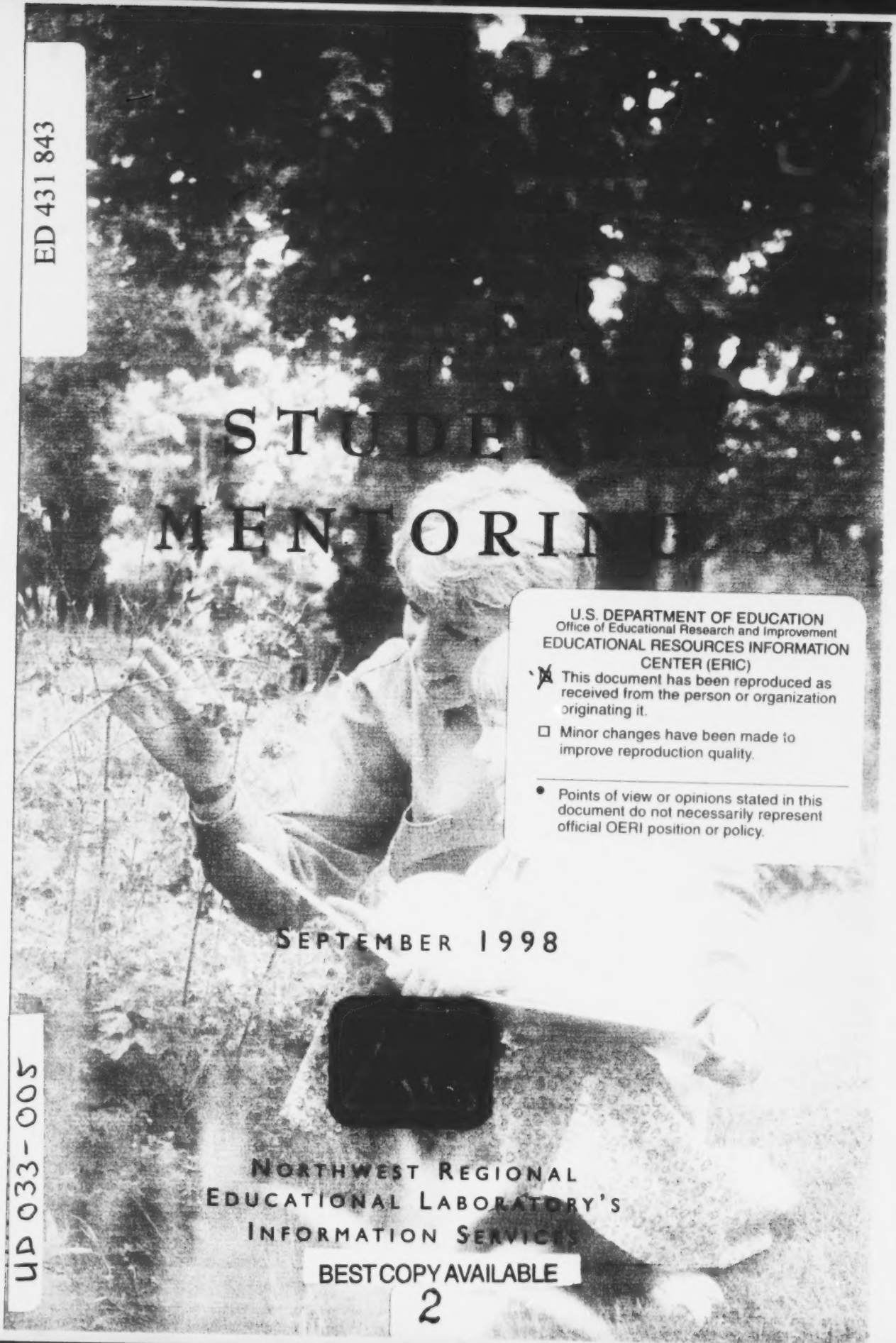

STUDENT MENTORING

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BY REQUEST...

STUDENT MENTORING

CORI BREWSTER
&
JENNIFER FAGER

SEPTEMBER 1998

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FOREWORD

This booklet is the eighth in a series of "hot topic" reports produced by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. These reports briefly address current educational concerns and issues as indicated by requests for information that come to the Laboratory from the Northwest region and beyond. Each booklet contains an explanation of the topic's importance, a sampling of how Northwest schools are addressing the issue, suggestions for adapting these ideas to schools, selected references, and contact information.

One objective of the series is to foster a sense of community and connection among educators. Another objective is to increase awareness of current education-related themes and concerns. Each booklet will give practitioners a glimpse of how fellow educators are addressing issues, overcoming obstacles, and attaining success in certain areas. The goal of the series is to give educators current, reliable, and useful information on topics that are important to them.

Other titles in the series include:

- Service Learning in the Northwest Region
- Tutoring: Strategies for Successful Learning
- Scheduling Alternatives: Options for Student Success
- Grade Configuration: Who Goes Where?
- Alternative Schools: Approaches for Students at Risk
- All Students Learning: Making It Happen In Your School
- High Quality Professional Development: An Essential Component of Successful Schools

INTRODUCTION

Students face barriers to academic and social success for many different reasons throughout the course of their education. Consider the following scenarios:

Shawnda, an eighth grader, loves algebra and is at the top of her class. When asked what she wants to do when she gets older, she can't think of a career where she could apply her math skills. And, despite having the highest test scores in her class, she doesn't have confidence that she could be successful in a math or technology-related career.

Meanwhile, John, a junior, is thinking about dropping out of school. He's already missed several weeks of class this semester and he just doesn't see any point in trying to catch up. As far as John can tell, nobody—at home or at school—really cares whether he graduates or not.

What can schools do to help students like John and Shawnda reach their potential? The answer may seem obvious at first: provide them with more individual attention, more guidance, more encouragement, more support. At a time when teachers are faced with overwhelming demands of increasingly diverse student needs, however, this solution hardly seems realistic. Are there other ways schools can provide students with more individual attention without placing even greater demands on classroom teachers?

One strategy that has become popular over the past decade is mentoring—pairing students with adult volunteers or older students who provide friendship, guidance, and support as students navigate new and ever more challenging circumstances. Through school-based mentoring programs, schools across the

country are offering students new avenues for exploring educational and career paths, stronger incentives for staying in school, and increased confidence in their ability to succeed. For students in need of career direction, mentoring programs can pair them with professionals who can familiarize them with the world of work, serve as role models, and bolster confidence. For students having social or academic difficulties, or for students at risk of dropping out, mentoring programs provide friends who are personally involved in students' success and who can both encourage them and hold them accountable for going to class and getting their work done. And mentoring programs are not just limited to these scenarios. Versatile and relatively low in cost to implement when compared to other school improvement efforts, mentoring programs are being designed for students of all ages and from all segments of the student population. Although mentoring is often considered to be primarily for students with low grades and limited opportunities, it is useful for gifted and mainstream students as well, providing them with opportunities to develop job and communication skills, practice decisionmaking, and learn more about subjects such as art, science, history, math, and technology.

This booklet provides an overview of school-based mentoring. Recognizing that no two programs are alike, it focuses on how student mentoring works, the benefits associated with it, and strategies for designing successful mentoring programs which address the specific needs of individual students, communities, and schools.

In Context

Today's youth are growing up in a world in which caring, supportive adults tend to have less time to spend with them and are increasingly hard to find (Freedman & Baker, 1995). As enrollment in the nation's schools continues to grow and resources dwindle in many areas, teachers often find themselves unable to provide individual attention and support to each student. Single and working parents have less time to spend with their children as they struggle to meet the time demands of work and family. And, for poor and migrant students especially, the national trend of greater geographic mobility has resulted in many students being cut off from the groups that mentoring relationships traditionally grew out of—extended family, longtime neighbors, family friends, and tribes (Freedman, 1993; Smink, 1990).

The decrease in adult involvement in children's lives has been linked to numerous consequences for youth, from low achievement or grades, to lowered career aspirations, to truancy and juvenile crime (Freedman, 1993; Smink, 1990). In an effort to counteract these trends, schools, social service agencies, and community organizations across the country are turning to mentoring programs, hoping to strengthen students' chances for success by providing them with greater access to caring adults and the wealth of resources those adults possess.

MENTORING: WHAT IS IT?

Definitions of mentoring vary widely, as do individual youth mentoring programs and the types of relationships they promote (Smink, 1990). Broadly defined, however, mentoring is a sustained "one-to-one relationship between a caring adult and a child who needs support to achieve academic, career, social, or personal goals" (McPartland & Nettles, 1991, p. 568). Unlike "natural mentoring" relationships which may develop independently between students and teachers, older friends, relatives, or coaches, "planned mentoring" relationships are those in which a young person—the "mentee"—is matched with a mentor through a structured program with specific objectives and goals in mind (Floyd, 1993).

According to Floyd, planned mentoring programs can be broken down into three general types:

- *Educational or academic mentoring* focuses on improving students' overall academic achievement. While these programs generally have specific school-related goals, such as raising students' grades, improving attendance, or curbing dropout rates, mentors do not concentrate only on tutoring or doing homework with their mentees. Instead, some academic mentoring programs ask that mentors simply spend time encouraging, talking to, and becoming friends with their mentees, hoping to boost academic performance indirectly by improving students' attitudes about school, raising personal goals, giving them incentives to attend regularly, etc.

- *Career mentoring* helps youth develop the skills needed to enter or continue on a career path. Career mentoring programs often pair students with adults who work in the students' general field of interest, providing students with a role model who can familiarize them with the world of work and offer guidance and support as they prepare to make the transition from school to work or higher education.

- *Personal development mentoring* supports youth during times of personal or social stress and provides guidance for decision-making. While these programs may foster improved academic performance, they focus primarily on improving student self-esteem, behavior, and decisionmaking ability; reducing high risk behaviors such as gang involvement, premature sexual activity, criminal activity, and drug and alcohol abuse; and introducing students to social, cultural, and recreational activities they may not previously have experienced.

To be sure, academic, career, and personal development mentoring frequently overlap. Rather than focusing on any one type of mentoring, this booklet looks at school-based mentoring in general, acknowledging that schools may choose to combine elements of two or all three types as they work to address multiple issues and meet diverse school and student needs.

Who Does Mentoring Serve?

As noted earlier, mentoring programs can be designed for virtually any segment of the student population, from elementary students with an interest in science to high school students at risk of dropping out. Although the majority of existing school-based mentoring programs target middle and high school students, some programs work primarily with elementary school students, operating on the belief that "personal attention should begin early—before poor study habits or negative behavior have a chance to become well-established and potentially destructive" (Lengel, 1989, p. 28).

Depending on school and community needs, mentoring programs can target (Faddis et al., 1988; Pringle et al., 1993):

- Gifted students
- Language minority students
- Minority students
- Female students
- Students from single-parent homes
- Students from low-income homes
- Students with low self-esteem, limited social skills, or behavioral problems
- Low-performing students, or students who need help in specific academic areas, such as reading or math
- Students who need encouragement in order to apply to college, enroll in vocational training, or find work
- Any other students with specific unmet needs

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Because youth mentoring programs vary so widely in scope, structure, and length of involvement, it is difficult for researchers to measure mentoring's effectiveness (Brown, 1995). Much of the information currently available on mentoring successes comes in the form of testimonials from former mentors and mentees, and from studies of non-school-based programs that serve a large enough number of students to provide valid test groups (Smink, 1990). In examining both school-based and private mentoring programs for youth, researchers have observed a number of benefits for students, schools, and mentors.

Benefits for students include:

- Improved academic performance (indicated by higher report card grades and standardized test scores) (Cragar, 1994; Pringle et al., 1993; Sipe, 1996)
- Increased attendance rates (Cragar, 1994; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Sipe, 1996)
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations (Floyd, 1993)
- Better attitudes about school (Pringle et al., 1993)
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence (Sipe, 1996)
- Improved behavior, both at home and at school, including fewer disciplinary referrals and less violent and disruptive behavior (Pringle et al., 1993; Sipe, 1996)
- Improved relationships with parents, teachers, and peers (Project PLUS, 1990; Sipe, 1996)
- Enhanced social, communication, relationship, and decisionmaking skills (Grossman & Garry, 1997)

- Heightened career awareness and ability to make vocational and educational choices
- Decreased likelihood of dropping out of school (Project PLUS, 1990); initiating drug and alcohol use (Sipe, 1996); or becoming a teen parent (Grossman & Garry, 1997)

Benefits for mentors include:

- Friendships with young people
- Connections with youth
- The satisfaction of having contributed to the community (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990; Smink, 1990)
- Opportunities to enhance personal strengths and develop new skills (Smink, 1990)

Benefits for schools include:

- Lower dropout rates (Project PLUS, 1990)
- Opportunities to further develop partnerships with businesses and community organizations (Faddis et al., 1988; Smink, 1990)
- Improved image of the school in the community (Pringle et al., 1993)
- Increased community support—through mentors who often become school advocates, the community gains a better understanding of the challenges students, teachers, and schools face and becomes more aware of schools' accomplishments and achievements (Pringle et al., 1993)

What Are The Limitations?

While mentoring has been shown to have numerous positive impacts for students, mentors, and schools, it is important to remember that mentoring is not a "fix-all" strategy. Mentoring alone cannot remedy all of the social and environmental factors which contribute to poor student attendance, performance, self-esteem, and behavior (Smink, 1990). In their two-year study of Project RAISE, a mentoring program for at-risk middle school students in Delaware, McPartland and Nettles (1991) found that while the effects of the mentoring program were "sizable, [they] were not sufficient to neutralize the academic risks with which students entered the program" (p. 568). Although middle school students who participated in Project RAISE improved attendance and report card grades in English, they remained below district averages in attendance, standardized test scores, grade retention rates, and nearly all academic areas. Researchers emphasize that mentoring programs targeting low-performing and at-risk students especially are most effective when offered in conjunction with other social and academic services geared toward improving student performance and addressing students' individual needs (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990).

Implementing a Mentoring Program: How Does it Work?

Although there is no one right way to go about developing a school-based mentoring program, there are a number of steps schools need to take in order to get a program off the ground and running smoothly. The following sections outline some basic steps and strategies for putting together a successful mentoring program that addresses the specific needs of schools and communities.

1. Getting started

The importance of careful planning cannot be emphasized enough. In fact, appointing a steering committee to be in charge of planning the mentoring program is one of the first steps you'll need to take. Be sure to give the planning committee plenty of time to develop program goals, solicit support, and locate staff for the mentoring program before making contact with potential mentors and mentees. Issues to discuss early in the planning process include:

Goals and objectives—Assess school needs and identify the program's target group and objectives (Smink, 1990). This is a good time to review current publications on mentoring and look at how mentoring has been used to benefit students at other schools. See Appendices A and B for lists of guidebooks and internet resources for developing school-based mentoring programs.

Infrastructure—Think about program structure and staff needs. Who will coordinate the program? What kind of support will the program coordinator(s) need? Depending on the size and scope of the program, it may take more than one full-time staff person to recruit mentors and mentees, conduct trainings, facili-

tate matches, support mentors, solicit funding and oversee daily program operations. Larger, multi-school programs may need to designate site coordinators for each campus in addition to an overall mentoring program director (Crockett & Smink, 1991). Keep in mind that running an effective mentoring program will require a great deal of time, skill, and energy—relying solely on the goodwill of volunteers to run the program is likely to burn people out and quickly compromise the mentoring program's effectiveness (Freedman, 1993; Sipe, 1996).

Logistics—Discuss what the mentoring relationship will look like: how long will relationships last? When, where, and how often will students and mentors meet (Faddis et al., 1988)? Note that it often takes up to six months for mentoring relationships to develop—for greatest effectiveness, mentors and mentees should meet for an hour or more each week for at least one full school year (Freedman & Baker, 1995).

Liability—Having students and mentors meet on school grounds under the supervision of program staff is the easiest way to limit liability. However, this also limits the privacy and the range of activities available to mentors and mentees (Crockett & Smink, 1991). If students and mentors will be meeting off-site, carefully work out insurance and liability issues with administrators, lawyers, and the district insurance agency (Glasgow, 1996). Ensure that the school, program staff, students, and mentors will be covered in case of accidents, incidents and accusations of abuse, and other emergency situations. Depending on your school's insurance policy, you may be able to address liability issues through informed consent—discuss transportation and other risks with parents and then ask them to sign a consent form agreeing to allow their child to participate (Crockett & Smink, 1991). Many school districts already have coverage for similar off-site activities built into their insurance policies

(athletic and work experience programs, for example)—you may be able to use these as models for extending insurance coverage to mentor/mentee meetings (Glasgow, 1996).

Funding—Calculate program costs and identify funding sources. Whether program funding comes from the school district or in the form of grants from foundations and local businesses, ensure that it will be stable and adequate to cover costs for the duration of the mentoring program (Sipe, 1996).

After the planning committee has mapped out the mentoring program's basic goals and structure, the next step is to solicit support for the program from parents, teachers, administrators, and the community. Providing an inservice for teachers and administrators is a good way both to garner support and give teachers an opportunity to identify students who would be appropriate for the program (Lengel, 1989).

2. Recruitment and screening

Once you have identified the program's target group and objectives, you will need to devise strategies for recruiting and selecting appropriate participants.

Recruiting mentees:

- Develop a system for identifying and selecting mentees. For example, if the program will target low-performing students, you will probably want to ask classroom teachers and counselors to identify students with low grades and test scores (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- Hold a meeting for parents and potential mentees outlining the program goals, structure, and expectations (Lengel, 1989; Smink, 1991).

- Weed out students who are unlikely to benefit from the program. If students are unwilling to participate or are unable to commit to meeting regularly with a mentor, they probably won't get much out of the program (New York State Mentoring Program [NYSMP], 1991).
- Ensure that parents are willing to cooperate with the program and will make their child available for meetings with the mentor (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- Have parents and mentees sign an agreement that states they understand the program and consent to participate

Recruiting mentors:

- Identify the qualities you are looking for in mentors and what your expectations of them will be: how much time will mentors need to commit to the program? what skills and experience should they possess?
- Decide where you will look for mentors. Do you want to recruit mentors from within the school (teachers, administrators, and older students), from the community (volunteers from local businesses, churches, community organizations, and colleges), or from both the school and the community (Smink, 1990)?
- Solicit volunteers. Advertising on the radio and in area newspapers, posting fliers around the community, and speaking to community groups are all good ways to attract volunteers (NYSMP, 1991).
- Hold an informational meeting for prospective mentors outlining the program goals and objectives (Lengel, 1989).

- Carefully screen volunteers. Ask applicants to provide information on their experience working with young people, their motivation for becoming a mentor, and the types of students they are interested in working with. It is also important to check applicants' references and criminal histories (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- Choose volunteers who have good communication and interpersonal skills and who can commit to meeting regularly with their mentee for the duration of the program (Crockett & Smink, 1991; Faddis et al., 1988).
- Don't be afraid to turn away volunteers who are unqualified or who can't make the time commitment. Pairing a young person with an unskilled or inappropriate mentor can be discouraging and damaging to the mentee (Freedman & Baker, 1995).

3. Training mentors

Quality orientation and training for mentors is essential to the success of any mentoring program (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Sipe, 1996). Important topics for mentor training include:

- Mentoring program goals and objectives (NYSMP, 1991)
- Strategies for developing effective mentoring relationships
- Methods of building trust with mentees (Crockett & Smink, 1991)
- Listening and communication skills, including training on different styles of communication (Smink, 1990)

- Basic information on youth development: what is reasonable to expect from mentees, how students of specific age groups learn and communicate, and what challenges and issues students targeted by the mentoring program may be facing (Crockett & Smink, 1991)
- Cultural awareness and diversity training (National Mentoring Partnership [NMP], 1991)

4. Matching mentors and mentees

For greatest success, consider the following when pairing students with mentors:

- *Student needs:* Matches should be made with each student's individual needs in mind. Mentors should be able to empathize with their mentee and tailor activities according to the mentee's interests and goals (McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Smink, 1990).
- *Common interests:* While it is not necessary for students and mentors to have similar personalities, it is important that they share some common interests (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- *Convenience:* Students and mentors must be available to meet at the same times and live within reasonably close proximity of each other or their meeting place if they will be meeting off campus (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- *Race and gender:* Although researchers disagree on whether same-race and same-gender matches are more beneficial to mentees than pairing students with mentors of a different race or gender, they note that same-race and same-gender matches often make parents feel more comfortable and avoid cultural misinterpretations and misunderstandings between students, mentors, and parents (Project PLUS, 1990).

◆ *Background:* In programs designed to provide mentees with successful role models, it is best to match students with mentors who are from similar backgrounds or who have successfully overcome obstacles similar to those the mentees are facing (Freedman, 1993; Project PLUS, 1990; Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990).

No matter how careful program staff are in matching students and mentors, however, some matches just won't work out. If, after the first few meetings, mentors and mentees still don't seem to "click," the program coordinator should meet with both parties separately to discuss this. The problem may be worked out by providing the mentor with more training or simply by reminding the pair that it takes time and effort to build a relationship (Crockett & Smink, 1991). However, if it seems unlikely that the pair will hit it off—or if there is any evidence of inappropriate behavior on the part of the mentor—do not hesitate to find the student a different mentor (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990). It is important that the mentoring relationship be positive and productive, even in the early stages as mentors and mentees begin to get acquainted (Sipe, 1996).

5. Ongoing program management and supervision

After mentors and mentees have been matched, there is still much work to do. To keep the program running smoothly, program staff will need to:

◆ Decide where, when, and how often mentors and mentees will meet. Ideally, pairs should meet for an hour or more per week for at least a year. Regular, frequent meetings help students and mentors develop the trust and friendship necessary for successful mentoring relationships (Crockett & Smink, 1991; Freedman & Baker, 1995).

- Arrange and confirm off-site mentor/mentee meetings. While students and mentors should have some input into where and when they meet, it is important that program staff contact participants on a weekly basis to confirm that they are meeting regularly (Crockett & Smink, 1991).
- Check in frequently with mentors, mentees, and parents to ensure that the mentoring relationship is positive and productive (Sipe, 1996). If a match doesn't appear to be working out after the first few meetings, assign the student a different mentor (Mosqueda & Palaich, 1990).
- Provide adequate support and communication structures for mentors. Hold regular meetings in which mentors can discuss their experiences, voice concerns, and get feedback from program staff and fellow mentors (Saito & Roehlkepartain, 1992).
- Recognize mentors and mentees for their achievements and participation in the program (NMP, 1991).
- Facilitate positive closure of mentoring relationships. At some stage, mentoring relationships will come to an end. Whether this is due to mentors and mentees choosing to leave the program, moving from the area, or reaching the end of the planned mentoring program, it is important that program staff provide activities to address final concerns and help bring a positive end to the relationship (McCarthy & Knox, 1993).
- Conduct program evaluations frequently (Crockett & Smink, 1991). Being able to demonstrate program effectiveness is essential in soliciting funding and other support for the program (Harjan, 1994).

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Making Mentoring Work

The effectiveness of any mentoring program depends largely on individual circumstances: student needs and interest, parental and administrative support, and the amount of time and effort put into planning and supervising the program. To maximize your chances for success, take into consideration the following list of "best practices" identified by researchers and mentoring program staff:

- Give yourself ample time to organize and put the program together. It may take a while to build a large group of committed and reliable mentors (McPartland & Nettles, 1991).
- Plan for the program to last at least one full school year. If possible mentors and mentees should meet for an hour or more each week that school is in session (Crockett & Smink, 1991; Freedman & Baker, 1995).
- Ensure that there are enough resources available to fully staff the mentoring program. If at all possible, avoid relying on volunteers to run the program (Freedman, 1993).
- Avoid making students feel they are being chosen for the program because there is something wrong with them or because they are "problem" students (Crockett & Smink, 1991). The mentoring program should always be referred to positively, as an opportunity for students to try new things and learn new skills (Pringle et al., 1993).
- Be clear with both students and parents about why the student was selected to participate in the program and what the program aims to achieve. Parents unfamiliar with the mentoring program may assume their child is being assigned a mentor because the school views them as inadequate parents (NYSMP, 1991).

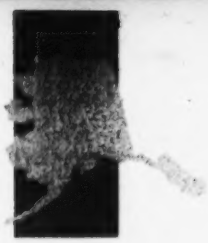
- Plan ways for students to provide their input and ideas into program activities, goals, and structure.
- Make sure that goals for the program, the student, and the mentoring relationship are clear and within reach (Crockett & Smink, 1991; McPartland & Nettles, 1991). Giving students a series of short-term goals to work toward is a good way to instill confidence and keep mentors and mentees focused and enthusiastic (NYSMP, 1991).
- Encourage mentors to relate to their mentees as a friend, not as a "teacher or preacher" (Grossman & Garry, 1997). The most successful mentoring relationships are those in which the mentor focuses primarily on developing trust and friendship with his or her mentee (Sipe, 1996).
- Don't underestimate the difficulty of building successful mentoring relationships. Inexperienced mentors may need a great deal of supervision and support (Freedman & Baker, 1995).
- And finally, avoid creating extra work for teachers. Mentoring programs should not place an additional burden on teachers or other school staff (Crockett & Smink, 1991; Pringle et al., 1993).

Conclusion

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of school-based mentoring programs is that they can be modeled to fit the specific—and constantly changing—needs of individual students, communities, and schools. Whether students need help making career choices, avoiding high risk behaviors, or negotiating cultural differences in a new school, mentoring is one way schools can provide students more individual attention and ensure they aren't left to face those challenges alone.

THE NORTHWEST SAMPLER

On the following pages are descriptions of eight Northwest mentoring programs. Though the programs are all different in design and scope, each seeks to better serve students with the benefits mentoring can provide. By no means are these meant to represent an exclusive listing of exemplary programs; rather they are just a few of the many good examples found in the region and throughout the country. Some have been in existence for several years, while others are fledgling efforts. Included for each site is location and contact information, a general description of the program, observed outcomes as a result of the program, and tips directly from these educators for others looking to implement similar ideas in their schools.



Location

Anchorage School District
25-500 N. Muldoon Road
Anchorage, AK 99506-1698

Contact

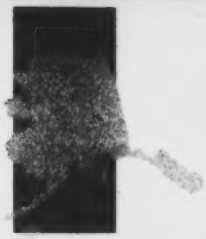
Claudia Wallingford, Mentor Coordinator
Phone: 907/337-4277
Fax: 907/337-5806

Description

The Anchorage School District's mentoring program is designed specifically for gifted students. Students are eligible if they are in grade nine through 12, have a qualifying test score (PSAT, SAT, PLAN, ACT, CAT 5, etc.) of 95 percent or above, and a GPA of at least 3.2. The program, now in its 15th year, matches students with a professional in the career area they plan to pursue, or have a strong interest in.

In order for the mentoring placement to proceed, interested students must provide the program coordinator with two letters of recommendation, a resume, and data sheet. This information, plus the student's transcript, are sent to the mentor prior to the first meeting. When a match has been made, the student, program coordinator, mentor, and parents meet to plan an outline of activities or projects that the pair will pursue. Once the plan is complete, students begin regular visitations to their mentor's workplace.

Students have 12-20 meetings with their mentor over the course of the relationship. The total time commitment is between 45-65 hours. Students are required to keep a journal of their experience



which is turned in to the coordinator every month of the mentorship. The journal, regular attendance at mentor appointments, and a capstone project based on their experiences are all part of the one-half credit students receive for the mentorship.

Observed Outcomes

- Students receive hands-on experience that helps them focus their career aspirations
- Students receive enrichment opportunities beyond what is offered in a regular classroom
- Students feel the mentorship gives them a competitive edge in being accepted at the college of their choice
- Mentors feel a sense of community involvement, and appreciate an opportunity to positively influence a young person
- Mentors report the mentorship gives them an opportunity to review and renew their own commitment to their profession

Keys to Success

- Keep the mentorships flexible yet structured
- Be sure students check-in with program coordinators on a weekly basis to provide updates of their progress and/or problems
- Be vigilant in monitoring mentorships—they need guidance and support to flourish
- Involve students who are self-directed, motivated, and prepared with appropriate course work for the specific mentorship
- Provide students with mandatory training (i.e. communication skills, problem-solving strategies, and tips on how to dress professionally) that prepares them for the experience

Location

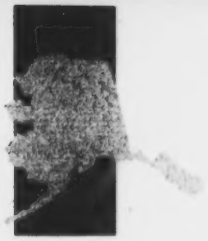
Juneau-Douglas High School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801-8529

Contact

Jan Anderson, School-to-Work Coordinator
Phone: 907/463-1900
Fax: 907/463-1919

Description

As part of its school-to-work program, Juneau-Douglas High School partners with the Juneau Women's Network to provide mentoring opportunities to all girls in grades nine through 12. The Women's Network is a group of businesswomen who meet to discuss career issues and community topics. This year, they recommended that a mentoring program be developed specifically for adolescent girls. As a result, many offer themselves as mentors to Juneau-Douglas High School girls in need of, or interested in, career direction. Presently, 21 pairs are meeting through the program. Students may request to be involved in the program, or they may be recommended by a teacher, counselor, or their parents. Participation is voluntary and no academic credit is given. To become involved, coordinators ask that students have an identified interest in a subject or career, and have a desire to explore it with the help of a mentor. Motivation is the primary requirement. Once a student is matched with a mentor, there is no prescribed format for the relationship outside of a general "life beyond high school" focus. The relationship is based solely on the needs of the student. Mentees gain exposure to job shadowing, business meetings, business lunches, and recreational activities. In addition, they may work together on homework,



school projects, and developing life skills. The goal of the program is to help female students understand that what they learn in school is applicable in the real world, and to provide them with personal academic and career support.

Initially, both mentors and students are asked to fill out informational applications that allow program coordinators to make appropriate matches. Once a match is made, the pair is encouraged to develop a mentoring plan that details their goals of working together and activities they may pursue together. The school asks that mentors contact their mentees two to four times per month. Such contacts may be by telephone or e-mail, but at least one contact is face-to-face. Total contact time may range from eight hours over a semester or project, to 20 hours or more over a year. Time involved depends on individual needs and the time needed to reach mutually agreed upon goals. Mentors are also asked to keep their discussions with mentees strictly confidential, enabling them to foster an atmosphere of trust. If a situation ever arises that the mentor feels must be discussed outside the pair, she must first discuss it with the student.

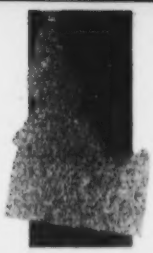
Program coordinators or supervising teachers monitor the progress of pairs regularly. At the end of each semester, the student, mentor, parent, and teacher or coordinator evaluate the success of the partnership to ensure that it is useful and satisfying for both the student and the mentor. Mentorships may last for only one semester or they may go on for several years, depending on the needs and availability of mentor and mentee. When the mentorship is near its end, goals and activities are evaluated by program coordinators.

Observed Outcomes

- A few of the mentoring relationships have resulted in job offers to students in their career interest area
- A number of participants have requested a continuation of the match during subsequent school years

Keys to Success

- Ensure that both mentors and students are willing to make the time commitment necessary for a successful experience. This needs to be stressed at the onset so that persons unwilling or unable to spend the time do not sign on to the program
- Match students' career interests closely with the mentors' profession (Don't be in a rush to make matches)
- Develop and conduct mentoring orientations for both the mentors and mentees to explain the program, expectations, responsibilities, etc.
- Closely involve the program coordinator at all stages of mentoring relationships, especially when an at-risk student is involved



Location

Monroe Elementary School
3615 Cassia Street
Boise, ID 83705

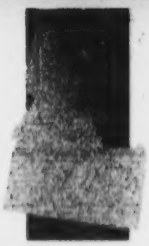
Contact

Rick Bollman, Principal
Cindy Roberts, PIE Chairperson
Phone: 208/338-3488
Fax: 208/338-3614

Description

The Friends Program at Monroe Elementary School pairs students in grades K-6 in mentoring relationships with employees of Idaho Power. It is a joint effort of the school, the school's Partners In Education (PIE) group (parent-teacher group), and the Idaho Power Company. The mentors are matched with one student whom they agree to visit at least twice a month during the student's lunch time. They are asked to be that student's friend for at least a year, and can continue the relationship as long as the student is at the school and both parties wish to continue meeting.

During their meetings, pairs eat lunch and do a variety of activities together. They can select activities off an activity cart that is provided by the school. It includes things like art supplies, a camera, and games. Though pairs are not allowed to leave campus due to safety and liability concerns, pairs may meet in the school library, the child's classroom, the reading room, or they can go outside. The idea is to give them a place to get away from the hubbub of the rest of the school. Logistics of when and where pairs meet are handled by the school secretary. She makes sure



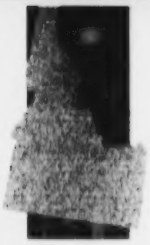
mentees are present when they are supposed to be and that mentors sign in and wear a Friend identification badge when present in the school.

Mentees are selected by teachers for different reasons. They are not necessarily at-risk or high-needs children; rather they represent students whom teachers feel would benefit from a long-term relationship with an adult friend. Once selected, they sign a commitment form and their parents sign a permission slip. In addition, they receive a packet of information about the Friends Program that contains interaction hints, a list of what a mentor does and does not do, and a copy of the school's mentor interaction policy.

Actual matching of pairs is done primarily by the school counselor. She sorts applications taking into consideration requests from Idaho Power personnel regarding age and gender, combines that with special needs or concerns for either party, and comes up with the matches she feels are most appropriate. If for some reason a match does not work, mentor or mentee can contact the school counselor, principal, or Idaho Power program liaison to request a change or to be released from the program.

All new mentors must participate in the school's mentor training in the fall which is based on the mentor handbook developed at the school. It includes basic information on student matches, hints for interactions and expectations, a policy statement, staff lists, a school map, school calendar, school schedule, and a list of other Idaho Power personnel volunteering as mentors. Twice a year mentors have the opportunity to meet with school staff and PIE members to discuss the Friends Program.

The program once relied on the recruitment efforts of coordinators to ensure enough mentors were available. Now that it has



existed for nearly 12 years, the program's reputation is strong enough to enlist mentors. The program is so popular with students, that there is always a waiting list. The program is also promoted through Idaho Power e-mail networks and through local news coverage.

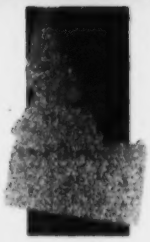
The Friends Program is coordinated mainly by the PIE committee, which meets for breakfast once a month to discuss the program and other school-related issues. It is also evaluated annually to determine how it can be improved.

Observed Outcomes

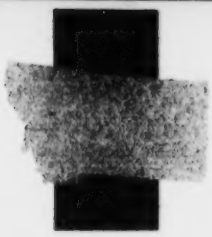
- Students who participate in the program demonstrate higher self-esteem
- Students look forward to seeing their mentor each time
- Students make sure they are always present to be with their friend
- Mentors are enthusiastic about the program, therefore it continues to be a priority at Idaho Power
- Parents and staff have increased respect for, and awareness of, Idaho Power through the Friends Program

Keys to Success

- Develop a partnership with a local company that believes in the program as much as you do
- Ensure that communication between parents, school staff, mentors, mentees, and the business partner is frequent and open



- Show appreciation to the business partner by sending thank-you notes, having recognition ceremonies, bulletin board displays, and media attention
- Enlist a core group of people to oversee the program that includes representatives of the school staff, the business partner, and parents



Location

Monforton Elementary School
6001 Monforton School Road
Bozeman, MT 59715

Contact

Suzanna Irion, Program Director
Phone: 406/586-1557
Fax: 406/587-5049

Description

Now in its third year, Mentors For Monforton, matches children in kindergarten through eighth grades with high school students who have been carefully screened and selected to be mentors. Matches are made based on shared interests, personalities, and age. Generally, cross-gender matches are not made unless a child presents an obvious need for a mentor of the opposite sex (i.e. a boy who has no contact with his mother may be paired with a female mentor).

The program, which is a partnership between the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Gallatin County, Monforton School, and Bozeman High School, began in an effort to curb the high dropout rate the area was experiencing. The Big Brothers and Big Sisters agency provides an individual who is in charge of taking attendance for the high school students, collects their journals each week, and rides the bus to and from Monforton with them on their twice weekly visits. (The pairs spend two hours together each week during school hours at Monforton.)

The relationship between the mentor and mentee is built around tutorial activities, playing games, working on art projects, and

talking. Mentors are also encouraged to keep in contact by phone with their mentee during the week, or by simply dropping them a note. Mentees also take monthly trips to the high school. These visits familiarize them with their future school and help them gain an appreciation for higher learning. Group activities are held throughout the summer months.

The program seeks to acquaint the younger students with the high school and its procedures, and also to introduce them to older, positive role models. The mentees are students who may be at-risk or who display nervousness about transferring to the high school. They can be referred by teachers, parents, or themselves. The mentors are generally students who are interested in becoming teachers and who are enrolled in the high school's mentoring class. They are accepted in the program after going through a rigorous application and interview process, and successfully demonstrating that they meet set mentor criteria.

Each Friday, mentors meet together and receive training from program coordinators to further their skills. They address topics such as violence prevention and listening strategies. For their work, mentors receive one-half community service credit per semester. On the two days of the week that they are not mentoring or receiving mentor training, they work in the high school as student aids.

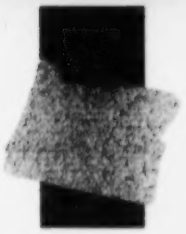
The program matches about 30 pairs each year, but has great growth potential because student interest in the program is high.

Observed Outcomes

- Even when the mentorship is completed, many pairs have stayed in contact
- One mentor was so inspired by her experience that upon graduation, she initiated a mentoring program at her college
- A number of mentees have come back to serve as mentors after they leave Monforton

Keys to Success

- Carefully select mentors through an application and interview process, as well as through set criteria that they must meet (i.e. grade point average and demonstrated qualities of responsibility, reliability, and stability)
- Continually train mentors so as to strengthen their skills
- Have a file for each mentee that teachers and mentors pass back and forth to facilitate communication and tutorial assignments
- Read and respond to mentor journals on a timely basis (within 24 hours of receiving them)



Location

The Foundation For Student Volunteer Opportunities, Inc.
70 SW 143rd Avenue
Beaverton, OR 97006

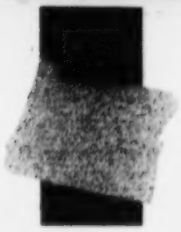
Contact

Lisa Mentesana, Program Director
Phone: 503/672-3500 ext. 255
Fax: 503/672-3503
E-mail: Lisa_Mentesana@beavton.k12.or.us

Description

Student V.O.I.C.E.S. (Volunteer Opportunities Involving Cooperative Educational Service), is a peer mentoring program supported and managed through the nonprofit organization, The Foundation For Student Volunteer Opportunities, Inc. in cooperation with the Beaverton School District and the PEAKS-Washington County Americorps Team office out of Forest Grove School District. Student V.O.I.C.E.S. is beginning its fifth year of service in the Beaverton School District.

Student V.O.I.C.E.S. recruits mentors from middle school through college. The minimum service requirement for mentors is one hour per week, but many volunteers spend up to four hours a week with their mentees. College students are eligible to mentor students in grades K-12; high school students are eligible to mentor students in grades K-8; and middle school students are eligible to mentor students in grades K-1. Depending on the ages of the students involved, the nature of the mentoring relationships vary. Younger pairs may work on basic literacy activities, supervised by the mentee's classroom teacher, instructional assistant, and an Americorps Volunteer, or a Federal Work Study college

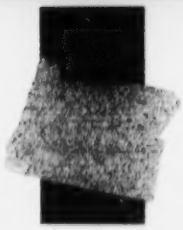


student volunteer. High school mentors work as homework support mentors and classroom aides. In addition, third and fourth year high school language students are recruited to mentor younger English as a Second Language (ESL) students whose native language is the same one the mentor studies. Together they work on literacy activities that not only improve the mentee's English language skills, but also serve to further enhance the mentor's foreign language abilities. All student volunteer mentors work one-on-one or in small groups with mentees throughout the school year. Many mentors also provide assistance in districtwide summer programs. Overall, mentors work to be both academic and social role models to their younger peers, acting as friends and confidants.

Districtwide, almost 700 students are involved in V.O.I.C.E.S. as either a mentor or mentee. And it is not uncommon for one-time mentees to become mentors as they get older and become more confident in themselves. Several area schools outside of the 22 participating Beaverton schools also take part in the program. The success of the program relies on its volunteers and partnerships with area businesses.

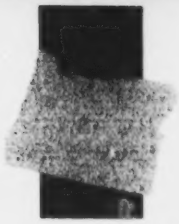
Observed Outcomes

- As a result of the mentoring, teachers do not need to spend as much time working with under performing students
- Some students who were once mentees have become mentors
- Both mentors and mentees are more confident learners
- Mentees are more involved in learning during classroom hours
- Mentors demonstrate increased involvement in community issues



Keys To Success

- Establish solid partnerships with community and business organizations—such partnerships are key to ongoing growth and stability
- Invest in mentor training so as to foster successful mentoring experiences
- Communicate openly and frequently with all schools involved
- Provide qualified supervision to monitor mentoring in all program sites



Location

Ontario School District
195 SW 3rd Avenue
Ontario, OR 97914

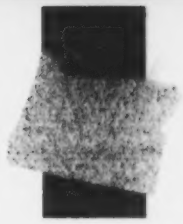
Contact

Linda Marion, Volunteer Coordinator
Phone: 541/889-5374
Fax: 541/889-8553

Description

Many adults in the small eastern Oregon town of Ontario participate in the Ontario School District's Lunch Buddy program. Over the past four years Lunch Buddies, a mentoring program that pairs students in first-through eighth-grades with adult volunteer mentors, has attracted counselors, accountants, farmers, bankers, stay-at-home parents, retired teachers, and others. In the early stages of the program, recruitment was conducted via presentations to community groups such as the Lions, Rotary, American Association of Retired Persons, church groups, and businesses. Today, word-of-mouth is an effective way to recruit additional mentors, yet there continues to be a need to enlist mentors through presentations to local community groups, businesses, and service agencies.

Participation in the program requires mentors to commit to spending one lunch hour per week with their mentee. While together, the pair eats lunch and works on an activity together. The mentors choose the meeting day, and the mentees choose the activity. Mentors are also required to attend a training that details how to work with children, and the responsibilities involved in mentoring a child. They must submit references



and have a criminal background check. After the training, mentors become state registered volunteers through the State Department of Human Resources, which allows them to be covered by state liability insurance. When the training is completed and everything else is cleared, the adult is matched with a student who shares common interests and has been identified by a teacher, parent, other staff member, or themselves as one who could benefit from adult interaction. Children may be identified for the program if, for example, they don't get much one-on-one time with adults, or they may be students who need a little extra motivation to succeed in school. Great effort is made to ensure the Lunch Buddy program is positive and that it is seen by children as a privilege, instead of something reserved for troubled kids.

The program coordinator, who makes the matches, has a few rules that guide the program.

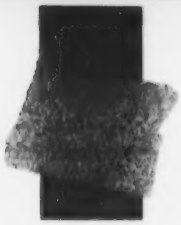
(1) Cross-gender relationships are not allowed. The only exception to this rule is if a child for reason of parental loss would benefit from a cross-gender match.

(2) Gifts from mentors to students are not allowed. This prevents jealousy between students, and keeps students from getting involved in the program just to receive gifts.

(3) Pairs are not permitted to leave campus.

(4) Homemade food is not allowed. If mentors choose to bring food to their mentee it must be purchased from a store or restaurant.

To date, there are 26 Lunch Buddy pairs meeting in the district, but the number of matches fluctuates each year. Mentors are asked to meet for at least one school year with their mentee, but the relationship can go beyond that, if both wish to continue.

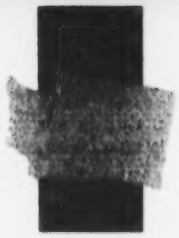


Observed Outcomes

- Surveys of teachers and mentors indicate that lower-level students who have participated in the program have improved their attitudes toward school, as well as their self-esteem and self-confidence; in addition they have developed trust in relationships
- Some mentees' grades and reading abilities have improved
- Certain extended mentorships (one in particular lasted four years) have taken students from being likely school drop-outs to successful students, doing well academically and involved in school activities

Keys to Success

- Take the time to find the right matches
- Provide mentors with adequate training
- Provide opportunities for mentors to come together to discuss their experiences
- Ensure that the school staff is supportive of the program and willing to cooperate with mentors to make it successful
- Have a designated program coordinator who can oversee and guide the effort



Location

Yakima Valley Community College
PO Box 22520
Yakima, WA 98907-2520

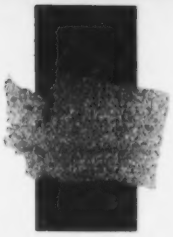
Contact

Loueta Johnson, Equity Coordinator
Phone: 509/574-4980
Fax: 509/574-4737

Description

For the past three years, the Yakima Valley Community College Women's Program has sponsored two group mentoring programs—one targeted at Native American teenage girls and one targeted at pregnant or parenting teenage girls from a local alternative school. Unlike any of the other mentoring programs described in this booklet, this group mentoring effort takes small groups of youth (generally less than 10 students) with similar backgrounds, and guides them through structured experiences intended to broaden their social and academic horizons. Though this program may not fit the traditional definition of mentoring as a one-on-one relationship, program coordinators are convinced it works precisely because activities occur in a group situation. Specifically, the girls served benefit from positive group interaction and peer support that they might not otherwise receive.

Although the program partners with different alternative schools each year, the focus is generally to provide students with enough exposure to career and academic activities, that they learn to think beyond their everyday life and see their potential for suc-

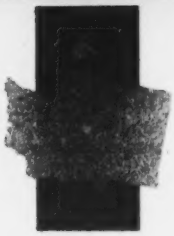


cess in the world. It works to remove them from their comfort zones and offer them unique growth experiences within a safe, accepting peer group.

In their work with pregnant and parenting teens, program coordinators meet monthly for two hours with participants at the local museum where they use museum resources and space for learning activities. With a general emphasis on math and science, mentees explore geology, meteorology, and archaeology under the guidance of a program coordinator and a teacher. They participate in hands-on activities that encourage self-paced learning, intellectual stimulation, and self confidence.

In order to provide Native American girls with broader career awareness, counselors at the Yakama Nation Tribal School partnered with Yakima Valley Community College to coordinate the group mentoring program. Once or twice a month, the girls are picked up from the reservation and taken to the college where they have the opportunity to participate in a vocational activity sponsored by one of the college departments. Program coordinators try to give the mentees a very different experience each visit. For example, at one visit they may work with staff from the dental hygiene program, doing mock dental work; at another they may work with staff from the drafting program, experimenting with computer aided drafting programs. All experiences involve hands-on exploration. Not only does this mentoring effort give the girls a chance to explore a variety of career options, but it also helps to eliminate some of the isolation they experience while living on the reservation.

These mentoring projects have been sponsored by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's Equity Office in Washington and through a grant from the Carl D. Perkins Applied Technology Education Act.



Observed Outcomes

- Participants interest in science careers has increased
- Parenting teens who participate in the program demonstrate a desire to share math and science activities with their children

Keys to Success

- Identify program partners (i.e. businesses, education agencies, or community organizations) who have similar missions and working styles
- Be sure that roles and expectations are clearly defined for everyone involved so as to prevent confusion and misinterpretations

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APPENDIX A: GUIDEBOOKS FOR DEVELOPING MENTORING PROGRAMS

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Faddis, B., Ruzicka, P., Berard, B., & Huppertz, N. (1988). Hand in hand: Mentoring young women. A guide for planning, implementing, and evaluating a mentoring program. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Glasgow, N. A. (1996). Taking the classroom into the community: A guidebook. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Mosqueda, P. F. & Palaich, R. (1990). Mentoring young people makes a difference. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

McCarthy, N. & Knox, L. (1993). The individualized mentoring model: A recipe for success. Portland, OR: Multnomah Education Service District Press.

New York State Mentoring Program. (1991). Program operation training manual. New York City, NY: New York State Mentoring Program (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 353 346)

Appendix B: Mentoring Internet Sites

One to One / The National Mentoring Partnership:

http://www.mentoring.org/index.html

This is a particularly useful site, offering current research and information on mentoring; on-line support for developing or expanding mentoring programs; lists of publications and other mentoring resources; descriptions of a wide variety of school-based and private mentoring programs for youth; and links to consultants who can help with program development and planning.

International Mentoring Association:

http://www.indiana.edu/~rugsdev/ima.html

This site contains several articles on current issues in mentoring, offers limited information on funding sources for mentoring programs, and provides links to several individual school-based mentoring programs and other mentoring resources. For some reason, it is difficult to reach this site with some servers. An alternate route to the International Mentoring Association page is to go to http://www.indiana.edu (Indiana University home page) and then search their directory for "International Mentoring Association."

THE MENTORING INSTITUTE:

http://www.mentoring-resources.com/

This site links you to the Mentoring Institute's "Virtual Mentoring Library" which contains numerous abstracts and syntheses of studies on individual mentoring programs and issues.

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